

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mary Rios, 75, homemaker and former fertilizer factory worker

"There were a lot of Puerto Rican soldiers that used to come up this way. So there was a house on the other side where they had a lot of dancing every Sunday. I think they used to cook food and sell. Yeah, like pasteles, and the turnovers--you know, pork turnovers, all those kind of stuff like that. So they used to come. They used to visit my mother, too, some of them. Yeah, used to spend the day."

Mary (Salcedo) Rios, Puerto Rican, was born on January 13, 1909, in Paauhau, Hawaii. Her mother, Jenny Borero, and father, Paul Salcedo, emigrated from Puerto Rico to the islands in ca. 1901. Both lived in Paauhau's Puerto Rican Camp and labored in the sugarcane fields.

While Mary was still an infant, the family moved to Oahu. Her father was hired as a laborer at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and worked there for eight years until a lay-off precipitated a return to the Big Island. They remained on the Big Island for four years, but, again, returned to Oahu, residing in the Palama and Kalihi districts of Honolulu.

Mary married Philip Rios in 1931, and they made their home in Palama. Later, in 1939, they moved to Kalihi Valley.

The mother of three, Mary now enjoys the company of her grandchildren. She is a member of Our Lady of the Mount Church, the Sacred Hearts Society, and the United Puerto Rican Association of Hawaii.

Tape No. 11-47-1-84 and 11-48-1-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mary Rios (MR)

March 28, 1984

Kalihi Valley, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Mary Rios at her home in Kalihi Valley, Oahu on March 28, 1984.

So, Mrs. Rios, can you tell me when you were born?

MR: I was born on January 13, 1909 at Paauhau, Hawaii, the Big Island.

MK: And what was your mother's name?

MR: My mother's name was Jenny Borero, and my father's name was Paul Salcedo.

MK: And you told me that your mother and father came to the islands in 1901 from Puerto Rico.

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: What did your parents tell you about their lives in Puerto Rico?

MR: Well, actually, they didn't say very much. I mean, us kids weren't, you know, in the conversation with them. So, we didn't learn much from that.

MK: Would you know where in Puerto Rico they came from?

MR: Ah, no. I'm sorry, I don't know. No, no.

MK: At the time that they came to the islands, how old were they?

MR: My mother was six and my father was about twelve.

MK: And who came with them?

MR: Their family--my father's family came all together. His father, and mother, and sisters, and brothers. But my mother came with them. My mother didn't come with her mother. She came separately with them.

MK: Why was that?

MR: That was because there was a little mix-up in the boat schedule. My grandmother, my mother's mother, had gone to her place which was far, and she had to walk. It would take her, oh, about two days. So she left my mother because she went to pack up her clothes. But she left my mother with the other family. Then, the man that was in charge of the immigration, he came and he told them that they had to leave and go into the boat. They couldn't wait. So, my grandmother hadn't returned yet. So, she was left behind for another ship. So, that's how they got separated. So, my mother had to come with the Salcedos, yeah?

MK: Uh huh. How were the Salcedos related to your mother?

MR: They were cousins. See, my two grandmothers were sisters. And that's what happened. She [MR's mother] was just like an orphan, and they raised her up, but then my father and she got together.

MK: Then, your mother's mother, did she ever come to the islands over here?

MR: She did, she did. She landed in Aiea, of all places. They sent her to Aiea. She came as a widow, she didn't have a husband. Then, from Aiea, she went to Maui. There, she settled. And there she got married to another man. That's where she was. My mother didn't know. My mother thought, oh, she must be dead, you know. But through somebody, some young man that came from Maui, he kept looking at my mother. This an interesting story, you know. He kept looking at my mother. So, my mother was getting kind of upset about it. She asked him, "Why are you staring at me?"

He said, "You know, there is a lady in Maui that says that she lost a daughter in Puerto Rico." He said, "This lady resembles you. Kind of resembles you."

Then, my mother said, "Oh, what is her name?" She had known her mother's name through the Salcedos. So she said, "What is her name?"

The man said, "Anita Rodrigues."

And then, my mother said, "Chee, that must be my mother." That started to bother her, you know. She wanted to find out for sure. So, she made up her mind to go to Maui. My father couldn't leave--so this friend of hers took us to Maui. I vaguely remember. I was about four or five years old. I can remember that trip. I know we went in this boat and it was rough, a rough trip. When we landed over there, you know, we had to ride the horse and buggy from the pier. So, we got into that horse and buggy and we went to the Puunene Plantation. Over there, my mother asked if anybody knew who Anita Rodrigues was and where was she living. This lady didn't

even wait. She went, "Oh, Anita! Come, come! Here's your daughter." Just like that. I remember this lady ran out. She came and she hugged my mother, you know. My mother was kind of startled because she was thinking, "Oh, I don't know any of these people."

Anyway, we went in the house. The first thing she told my mother, "Take off your shoes and stocking." So, my mother took off her shoes and stocking. My mother had the two toes of her two feet stuck together. So she said, "You are my daughter!" That's how we got to know, meet the family. But we stayed, I think, two months with her. She wanted us to stay on. She didn't want us to come back. But my mother already had three of us. So, she said, "No, I have responsibilities. I have to go back home." So we came back home. About six months later, she [MR's grandmother] died. So, my mother seen her only once. Only once that she could remember her mother. Once only, yeah. But then, the family kept looking for my mother all the time. They used to come back and forth from Maui. You know, the children that she had from the second marriage. Yeah. So, that's how we got to know. But it was really a sad story, the separation and all that, you know.

MK: It was kind of fortunate, though, they got to meet, yeah?

MR: Yeah. For once. She said, oh, this boy kept looking at her and she got kind of upset.

(Laughter)

MR: He said, "You know, there's a lady in Maui that talks about a daughter that she left in Puerto Rico. And she's very sad about the whole thing." So, that's how it happened, yeah.

MK: And so, when your mother came, though, with your father's family, where did they first go in the islands?

MR: Oh, they went straight to Paauhau.

MK: Oh. And what camp were they in?

MR: The Puerto Rican Camp, so-called. You know, Japanese Camp, Portuguese Camp, the Puerto Rican Camp, yeah.

MK: What kind of work did they do, the family?

MR: Oh, they went straight to the [sugar] cane fields. They worked in the cane fields. Doing everything, you know. What you call--hō hana, putting cane in the flumes, cutting cane, all that.

MK: When your parents, maybe, talked about those old days, what did they think about those old days in the fields?

MR: (Chuckles) Oh, well, they were kind of disappointed in the beginning.

Because they thought they were coming to something better, you know, than that. But they were satisfied they were earning their living and raising their families. So, they felt satisfied, yeah.

MK: And then, the Puerto Rican Camp, what did they tell you about that Puerto Rican Camp at Paauhau?

MR: To us kids, not much. Nothing that I know of, really.

MK: What were some of the family names from that Puerto Rican Camp? They had Salcedos. . . .

MR: Oh, there were a lot of them. I don't quite remember the rest, but there were quite a few. Salcedos, Garcias, and. . . . Who else? There was a godmother of mine. Now, what was their name? Oh, Rodrigues. There were other Rodrigues families, you know. Not related, but they were of the same name. Yeah, there were quite a few. I don't quite remember all of them because they only used to talk about it. I didn't really know the people.

MK: In that camp, what do you remember about hearing about any kind of activities? Puerto Rican activities?

MR: Oh, no. The only activities they had was, they used to dance a lot. (Laughs)

MK: What kind of dancing?

MR: (Laughs) Yeah. They play music and dance a lot. That's the only recreation they had. Like if they got through work Saturdays, maybe midday, they would come home and, oh, take a bath, and feel happy, you know. They would start playing music in one house, and pretty soon the whole camp was there dancing and having a good time till the next day. Till Sunday.

(Laughter)

MR: They loved their dancing. Oh, they really loved dancing. I remember my father was one of them. He was crazy for dancing. (Chuckles)

MK: What kind of dancing did they do?

MR: Puerto Rican dancing. They danced something like a waltz. You know, regular waltz. That, and they used to dance--what they used to call that? Bolero or something like. . . . Yeah, all those kind. They had a few different types of dancing.

MK: I don't know if you can answer this question, but for your mother and father, when they were small kids in Paauhau, what was family life like for them?

MR: Oh, it was mostly work. In the evenings, maybe they used to get

together and chat, you know, talk story in the evenings. That's about all they had. Very little. Even in Kukuihaele, when I was already kind of big, that's all we did. We just met with the neighbors. The neighbors used to come around and visit. And they used to drink coffee and eat bread. You know, they used to make their own bread. That was about all.

MK: And then, you were telling me that when your mother was small, she couldn't go to school too much.

MR: No, she couldn't.

MK: Can you explain?

MR: She couldn't go to school because the school was so far. The school was in the next plantation. One plantation didn't have the school, their plantation. So they had to go to Honokaa. Yeah, to the school there. They had to walk. You know, these kids all walking to school? So, my grandfather said, no. The kids cannot go to school. That's too hard for them. So, they didn't go to school, but they went to work very early. Oh, nine, ten years old, they were already working in the fields. Yeah.

MK: So your mother and father both, then, went to work early?

MR: Early. My father, as soon as they came, because he was twelve years old. So, as soon as they came, he went to work in the cane fields.

MK: How did your mother and father get married?

MR: Oh, since they were living in the same house, well, one day my father said, "Well, we might as well get married." Just like that, you know. They were so. . . . (Chuckles) So, my mother, she was timid. So, she went along with it, and they got married. She was only about fourteen. 'Cause she was only fifteen when I was born. So, just about fourteen, that's all.

MK: What have you heard about, maybe, their wedding and any kind of celebration they had . . .

MR: They didn't have any. They didn't have any. They just went, got married. That was it. (Chuckles)

MK: I don't know if there was one out there, but what was there for church or religious activities out in that Paauhau area?

MR: They didn't have a church. They had to come to Honokaa again. So, they seldom went to church. But they had their own devotions at home, you know. They used to gather and have novenas, you know, pray the rosary. They were devoted, but they just couldn't go to church all the time. Once in a while, maybe, they would get dressed and go to Honokaa to the church there.

MK: Was just too far then?

MR: Too far. They had to walk. They never rode anything. I don't know why. I guess all of them couldn't own horses. You know, everything was horseback in those days.

MK: I know that when you were born and you were still a baby, you came to Aiea, Oahu. How come?

MR: Yeah, my father got tired of the plantation there, so we came to Aiea. He worked for a while in the fields. But then, after that, he put an application to Pearl Harbor and he got in. So, he worked as a laborer in Pearl Harbor. But after a few years, then they used to have what they call in those days--they used to lay the people off, but they used to. . . . Oh, I forgot what they used to call it. Well, anyway, he was laid off temporarily. Only he didn't know this, that it was temporarily. So, he was the type that didn't like to stay idle. He had to work. So, oh, he made up his mind all of a sudden and we went back to the Big Island. That's when we landed in Kukuihaele.

MK: You know, the last time you told me, when you were a baby you moved to Aiea and you lived there until you were about eight years old, yeah?

MR: Mm hmm. I think it was about eight.

MK: Can you describe the house you lived in, in Aiea?

MR: No, I don't remember at all. No.

MK: What do you remember about the neighborhood that you were living in, in Aiea?

MR: None at all.

MK: When you were living in Aiea, what did you do for school?

MR: I didn't go to school. I went to school in the Big Island, and I was nine years old then when I went to school. (Laughs)

MK: Oh, okay. So, you started in the Big Island?

MR: I started on the Big Island to school.

MK: So, when you were eight years old, your folks moved back to the Big Island's Kukuihaele, yeah?

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: What school did you begin over there?

MR: The Kukuihaele Elementary School.

MK: Try describe that school for me.

MR: It was just a long building. Lumber, you know. A long building, but it was all divided in classrooms. When I went there, I went to the first grade. And then I went right on till the fourth grade. I liked the school. I liked it. I liked the teachers. Yeah, I liked the--I remember the principal's name was Mr. [Kaaekuahiwi]. And his wife, Mrs. [Kaaekuahiwi] was a teacher, too. She used to teach the first grade. So I remember her class. And then, I was in the fourth grade when we came back here.

MK: What did you like about Kukuihaele School so much?

MR: Oh, I don't know. I liked the area, the place. I liked it, and I liked the kids. But I was one that liked school. I used to like school. And then, we moved, you know. We came back here.

MK: You mentioned that you liked the kids at school. What did you folks do as kids in the Kukuihaele area?

MR: Oh, we were all mixed, you know. All, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians. Yeah, we were all mixed. And we all played so well, you know. We played, and we got along so well together. But then, teachers were strict in those days, you know.

MK: Oh, yeah? How strict were they?

MR: They were strict. You couldn't fight or you couldn't use bad language. So we were scared. We were scared of the teachers. No, we behaved. (Chuckles) We were scared.

MK: You know, when you were living in Kukuihaele, what kind of a camp were you folks living in?

MR: Another Puerto Rican Camp. Yeah. I remember my auntie had a cow, you know. She used to have milk. She used to milk the cow and go to the Japanese Camp and sell it over there. I used to go with my cousin to the Japanese Camp and deliver the milk. (Chuckles)

MK: About how many Puerto Rican families lived in that camp?

MR: Oh, there were quite a few. Gosh. Actually, I can't even remember the names. There were the Salcedos, the Rodrigues again, Torreses, and Lopez, and Garcias again, and. . . . There were so many. Rosas. Family name Rosa. (Pause) Martinez. That's about all I can remember. There must have been a few more, but.

MK: Quite a few.

MR: Yeah. We were quite big.

MK: What kind of things did the Puerto Rican people do together over there?

MR: Like I said, the same thing, dance. Oh, but then, movies came along. Maybe every two months or three months a movie would come. Oh, we used to get so excited. (Chuckles) We got to go to the movies. So, we used to get together and go to the movies.

MK: Where did you folks watch the movies though?

MR: They had a theater. They had built a little theater over there by the store. You know, the plantation store. Yeah, they had built a little theater. So, we used to go (chuckles) to the movies. We used to get so excited.

MK: You know, in that Kukuihaele area, was there a town where you had the plantation store, the theater . . .

MR: Yeah. There was a little village, yeah. Mm hmm. A little town. We used to go on Sundays. We used to take a walk to the village, the little town over there. There was a store, Hino's Store. That was a pretty big store. This was clothing. This was clothing--you know, fabric and all that. Like the one here. I think that must be the family, you know, because I remember the name, Hino Store. We used to go and buy fabrics there and sew the clothes. And then, there was a little bakery. They used to make such delicious anpan. Oh, I never tasted that kind. They were big like that. One for nickel, you know. They were so delicious. We used to go there and eat anpan and drink soda, you know. And used to take a nice walk on Sundays. Yeah, it was good. Some of the people used to go over to Waipio Valley and bring home a lot of bananas. You know those Hawaiian bananas? Oh, they used to bring home a lot of bananas. They were free for the taking. So, that's what we used to do.

MK: I heard that there was a stream or a river down Waipio side. How about fishing?

MR: Fishing, I don't remember anybody going fishing. I guess the Japanese and Chinese did, though, you know. But us, we never thought of going fishing.

MK: You mentioned the plantation store, huh? How did you folks go shopping in the plantation store?

MR: You know what? Everybody had a book. Everybody had a book, and you would go and you would buy whatever you needed. They would put it down in that book. And then, at the end of the month when you got paid, the money went to the store and they would deduct whatever you owed. Sometimes, you came out with very little left over. (Laughs) Maybe a dollar or couple of dollars. That's about all, you know, to have. But they used [to] carry everything. Shoes, clothes, material, you know. They used to carry everything. So you just put everything down.

MK: You mentioned that you folks used to go to the fabric store, Hino's, to buy fabric and sew. How did you learn your sewing?

MR: I didn't learn any. My mother didn't learn any. But there was always a lady that could sew. So they used to buy the fabric and give it to her. And she used to sew the clothes. Even the men's clothes, she used to sew. This lady, this particular lady that we knew. Yeah, she used to sew everything.

MK: Puerto Rican lady?

MR: Yeah, mm hmm. She was also a midwife. 'Cause in those days, the doctor used to come about once a month. The doctor used to come. So, we had no doctor. So she was the doctor, that lady.

MK: So, what if somebody catch cold or get hurt?

MR: Oh, she would just---I don't know, they had their own remedies, you know. She used to just take, maybe oil or lard, and leaves, you know. I don't know, they used to pound leaves, and they used to put that on. Believe me, they used to get cured. Sores, and cuts, and all that used to get cured. If it was a bad thing, then they used to go to Honokaa. Take the patient to Honokaa Hospital. Like I remember one time, but that time the doctor was in. I remember this girl, oh, she got trapped or her hand caught in a trap. The thing, the spokes, they were sticking out of the hand, you know. Oh. And she went to the doctor. The doctor, they didn't have anaesthetics then. They used to do that cold blood, you know. They pull that thing out. Oh, I was a child, but I was nervous when I seen that. So, that was the life in those days.

MK: For you folks, the doctor and the church was still far away?

MR: No, they had a little church there. In fact, it's still there. It's so tiny. I think only about eight people fit in that little church. It's still standing. It's still there.

MK: What was the name of the church?

MR: Gee, I forgot. I went to see it, and I forgot. I forgot the name.

MK: Who served as the priest there?

MR: Yeah, the priest used to come from Honokaa again. You know, he wasn't resident over there. He used to come from Honokaa every Sunday to say the Mass. So tiny.

MK: By that time when people had babies, what kind of baptismal ceremonies were there?

MR: Yeah, well, they had to wait until the priest used to come and then take their babies to be baptized. On whichever day the priest came,

then the children used to be baptized. You used to make beautiful clothes, beautiful baptism clothes for the kids. Long little gowns, you know, white with those little bonnets, ribbons, and oh, was nice. Then they used to celebrate. That, they used to celebrate. Then they came home, and they would have a table full of food, and music. Then, they would have a good time. (Chuckles)

MK: In those days, what kind of foods would be put out on the table?

MR: Oh, they used to have like chicken soup with rice, meat stew or pot roast meat, yeah. They would have rice, and crackers, and cheese, and chocolate, and coffee, and whatever liquor they had. In those days was oke, you know. (Chuckles) Was Prohibition. But they used to make their 'ōkolehao. (Laughs)

MK: Puerto Ricans made 'ōkolehao, too?

MR: Oh, yes. They did. They found the recipe, and they made (chuckles). They did, yeah.

MK: How did people get the money, though, to do that kind of celebration?

MR: I don't know. They used to go to the store and put it down on their (chuckles) book. At the end of the month, that was it. I don't know. Sometimes, like my father, he had five gold pieces and he never spent that. He saved that. So, when we came from there, that's when he used that money, you know. But then, things got better and people used to help themselves a lot, you know. They used to raise their own chickens, and pigs, and cows, and goats, all that. Rabbits. They planted their own vegetables. So then they were able to save little bit.

MK: How was it for your family when you folks were living in Kukuihaele?

MR: Was good. Was good. Of course, my father was well liked. He was a workaholic, like, you know. He was well liked. It wasn't hard for us. It wasn't hard.

MK: You lived there until you were twelve years old, yeah, Kukuihaele side?

MR: No, actually it was---yeah. Because we came here in January. And in January, I made twelve. So, might as well say I was twelve years old when I left.

MK: How come you folks left Kukuihaele and you came back to Oahu again?

MR: Again, my father was tired of plantation life. (Laughs) He was like a roaming. . . . He got tired of plantation life. So he said, "Oh, let's go back to Honolulu." (Chuckles) So, there we go. We came to Honolulu. (Chuckles)

MK: So, how did you feel when you had to leave Kukuihaele?

MR: Well, I didn't feel anything really. To me, it was a thrill that we were coming, you know. We came to Hilo and we got on the boat. I almost died on the boat with seasick, but (chuckles) it was a thrill. Yeah, it was a thrill for me.

MK: When you came to Honolulu town, what did you think?

MR: I thought, "Oh, my, this is nice." Lots of houses, you know. And streetcars. Not too many cars, but streetcars, and big places, big stores. I said, "Ooh." I liked it. (Chuckles)

MK: Where did you folks live that time?

MR: At that time we went to live on Liliha Street. And then, that's when I went to school. I started school all over again, yeah. Liliha Street. And then, from there, we moved to. . . . Oh, what did I say? From Liliha Street we moved to the Punchbowl area, I think. Miller Street, yeah?

MK: Miller Street in the Punchbowl area. Before we talk about the Miller Street area, I was wondering, what kind of neighborhood was the Liliha area those days?

MR: Again, there was all kinds. All mixed. Upstairs was Hawaiians. We lived in a little room downstairs. The little stores were all Japanese or Chinese, you know. There was one Puerto Rican family only over there.

MK: One?

MR: Only one, yeah. But we didn't live there long. Only few months. Then we moved to the other--Miller Street.

MK: You mentioned that you started school. What school was that?

MR: Kaiulani. (Chuckles) Kaiulani School. I went from the fourth to the eighth. I was twelve years old, I was only in the fourth grade. I stayed there in Kaiulani School.

MK: How was the school for you since you came from a country school to a city school?

MR: It was pretty scary, you know, in the beginning. But I, gradually, got used to it. But it was scary, seeing a big school. And lot of kids, all kinds of kids. All kinds of teachers. But was okay. (Chuckles)

MK: Does one teacher or one classmate stand out in your mind now days?

MR: From way back, the fourth grade, (chuckles) yeah, I remember one.

This was a Korean boy, and he was kind of rascal, you know. And I remember the teacher getting so angry at him. She used to make him face the wall, you know, all the time. One time, I don't know, she found out something that he did that was kinda really bad. So she had his mother come to the classroom. And she had his mother spank him in front of all us kids. (Laughs) Yeah, that one, I even remember his name. Kim Pele Ho. (Laughs) Yeah. This was in the fourth grade, now.

MK: How about Puerto Rican children in Kaiulani School?

MR: There weren't too many, though. There were a few. When we got to the seventh and eighth grade, then we got a little more. Yeah, mm hmm. I remember one of my classmates. I think she lives in Kaimuki someplace. We were pals. Yeah, we were pals. So, we were a few. Not too many. My friends were mostly Japanese, Chinese.

MK: You know, from other people, I heard lunch time used to be good fun, eh?

MR: Yeah.

MK: What did you folks do lunch time?

MR: Play games, you know. Used to play, or else sit and just talk. Sit on the grass, just talk. I remember--oh, I had two other good friends of mine. Laura Kulia and Florence Yim. She [Florence Yim] is part-Hawaiian girl. I used to like them. They were from my area, though, you know.

MK: For you to come to school, how did you come from Miller Street to Kaiulani School?

MR: I walked. I walked to school and I walked back home. Never rode the streetcar. I used to walk. I used to enjoy those walks. Looking at the stores, you know, and walking (chuckles).

MK: What kind of stores and things did you see as you were walking back and forth from school?

MR: Oh, the clothing stores. The little markets--you know, neighborhood stores. The candy stores. They used to have candy stores, you know. Yeah, those bakeries. Little bakeries, you know. I remember, whenever I would have a dime, I would, at lunch time, walk from the school and into a little cafe. Little bakery like. They used to have lot of goodies. For five cents, we used to buy (chuckles) big little rolls. Little rolls all in one. They used to slice them and put butter in between. They were hot. I used to buy that. I used to love that bread. So, I used to buy that and one bottle of soda. Now, with ten cents, we did that and used to eat lunch. (Chuckles) When I didn't like the school lunches, eh?

(Laughter)

MK: What kind of stuff did they have for school lunch those days?

MR: We used to have stew, and long rice, and. . . . But it was good. And I remember the hot dogs--big ones, though. Long ones. Hot dogs. I never saw hamburgers. I don't remember seeing hamburgers. So there wasn't much variety in the school lunches. Little cream dishes. You know, haole style, cream dishes. Over rice or over toast or something. But later on, these trucks used to come into the school. You know, with lunches? And they used to allow them. Oh, that, I liked. I didn't have to go out. So we used to go buy those long hot dogs. They used to have long ones like that. And in between they used to have bean sprouts. I don't remember mustard, but I think they had ketchup and little bean sprouts. And they were so good, because they were fresh. They were so good. They used to sell other things, too, like sandwiches.

MK: How about the days that you brought home lunch? Were you bringing in Puerto Rican type foods?

MR: No, just bread and jelly.

(Laughter)

MR: Bread and jelly, that's all I used to take to school.

MK: When you folks were living in the Punchbowl area, what kind of neighborhood did you folks live in?

MR: This was something like tenement houses. Upstairs, downstairs. Upstairs, well, mostly relatives. There was another family around us. Oh, what was their name? Martinez. Yeah, there was another family. And then, of course, the mixture. The mixture of all the other races. But Puerto Ricans were few over there. There was the Martinez, us, the Salcedos, Dominicans. But we were all kinda related through marriage and all that kind of stuff. Rivera. Riveras and the Martinez. That's about all. The rest were all mixed.

MK: For your mother and your father, how were they with mixing with the other people in the neighborhood?

MR: Oh, good. Oh, they was terrific. They learned how to speak little Japanese. My mother was pretty good in Portuguese. Because growing up, they were more close to the Portuguese. And little Chinese, little Hawaiian. They learned a little bit of everything. It was terrific. Yeah, they understood one another.

MK: How about cooking?

MR: Cooking, mostly Puerto Rican food, yeah. But we did like the Chinese

food. Chinese food was here a long time, you know. So, we did like Chinese food. But mostly Puerto Rican food.

MK: You said you like Chinese food, but where would you folks go to eat Chinese food?

MR: Oh, they had Chinese restaurants. They did have, you know. Yeah. I even remember they used to cook the rice in those big, iron pots. There were little Chinese restaurants. Saimin. Oh, we like saimin. (Chuckles)

MK: And then, like Puerto Rican foods, what kinds of Puerto Rican foods did your mom make?

MR: Oh, there was the Spanish rice with either kidney beans, or gandules beans, or they even use lima beans. You can make Spanish rice out of anything. So they used to do that. Then stews. You know, Spanish stews. And chicken. They fried, or stewed, or even roasted. If they had place to roast, they used to roast. And the breads, we used to bake what we call dompenes. Those were baking powder breads, but we used to fry them. You know, you fry it like little rolls. Make like little rolls and fry them. Yeah. All those things. And pancakes. They used to make their own pancakes. And pork. They used to stew the pork or else fry it. They used to love fried pork. Sometimes they used to roast it in the stick, you know. Yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: I was wondering, since there were quite a few Puerto Rican families right in the Punchbowl area kind of related together, how did you folks celebrate holidays like Christmas?

MR: Oh, those were the best days. Christmas and New Year's. But this holiday thing, we didn't live too long in Miller Street. This was in Palama now. There had a lot of Puerto Rican families. So, again, they used to serenade one another during the holidays. When they come to your house serenading, we had to allow them to come in, no matter what time of night it was. We always had sweet bread or plain bread, and crackers, and cheese, and whatever we had. Pasteles, you know. You always did make that. We still do, anyway. We would put those things on the table. They would eat. Rice, ham, whatever we had. Even bacalao.

(Laughter)

MR: When everything used to go, we used to roast the codfish. (Laughs) Flake it, and put oil on it, and put it on the table. They clean up those things.

MK: And so, like after you folks lived Miller Street, you were living in Palama, yeah? Auld Lane. You were saying there were lot of Puerto Ricans down there.

MR: Yeah, mm hmm. Yeah. Although there were mixtures. We even had a Russian family over there. But there were quite a few, yeah.

MK: Can you tell me like how the Puerto Ricans were distributed in Palama? Like in camps or . . .

MR: No, no. No, we lived like this with each other, yeah. Like our house, and then the next house was Puerto Rican, but the next house were Hawaiians. Then, on this side, we had Chinese, two Chinese families. We became good friends. We lived just like family, you know. All of us over there. And we had part-Hawaiians and Portuguese. Down below, you know, the Portuguese. That's how it was, you know. Portuguese, Russian across the street. Then there were Puerto Ricans on the other side on Palama Street side. There, they had something like a little camp. Yeah, over there. Yeah. On School Street side, there was a camp there again. That's where my grandmother passed away. Yeah, my auntie used to live over there and she took care of my grandmother. My grandmother passed away over there.

MK: Since Palama had a lot of Puerto Ricans, you had like Christmases celebrated Puerto Rican style?

MR: Mm hmm, Puerto Rican style.

MK: What else was Puerto Rican style for you folks?

MR: Like the weddings and the baptisms again.

MK: How were the weddings?

MR: Oh, the weddings were all fun. (Laughs)

MK: Can you describe them? I've never gone to a Puerto Rican wedding. What happens? Try to describe it.

MR: Oh, they would get a lot food. You know, prepared a lot of food. Much like how it is today, but only in those days they were in the houses. You didn't have halls to go to. After the wedding in the church, a couple would come in. The people were all there, you know. Then everybody would sit down and eat, and drink like nobody's business. But they always had the music. Music was always there. Soon as (chuckles) people got through eating, they would push the table away one side and start dancing. They would dance. Maybe even two days, they would dance. But I remember my cousin. My cousin got married on the Big Island, though. When she got married, they had a three day holiday. Three days dancing and eating. Ah, that was too much. People from all over the plantations, all different plantations, came to that wedding. See, they made it

during Christmas. So they had a few days' holiday. You know, like a couple of days. But they took three days. Ah, they danced, ooh.

MK: You know, like when the people celebrated with dancing at the wedding, where did they get the bands from?

MR: They had their own. You know, like in the neighborhood. There was a couple of men or two or three that knew how to play music. All they needed was a guitar and there was another instrument, bigger than the uke. They used to play that. And a guitar. And then, a little--what you call that instrument that they, you know. . . .

MK: Oh, like mariachi [maracas]?

MR: Yeah! That, yeah, they used to have. That's all they needed. Yeah, one guitar. Once in a while, there was a man who'd know how to play the accordion. Then the thing was full force. (Chuckles) The dancing, full force. Even here, in the Palama area, we had all those little musicians, you know. That's how we used to celebrate the weddings and the baptisms. That's good fun, though. You know, was lot of fun.

MK: How about like the sadder times, you know, when you had funerals. Was that done Puerto Rican style, too?

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: What would happen at a Puerto Rican style funeral?

MR: Well, they would bring the casket in the house, and the people sit all around. During the night, they would say the rosary three times. Seven o'clock, twelve o'clock, and five o'clock in the morning. They would eat, you know, in between. They would have their snacks and all that. Talk stories. People used to talk stories. Even play a little games, you know. Play, so that people would stay awake, because was all night. Was an all night thing. Then the next day, well, they would do the same thing. You know, they go out and come back in the house. There was always somebody there. Then they would take the body to the church and burial. Everybody would go to the burial. Much like it is today. Same thing.

MK: In the Palama area, what church did the Puerto Ricans go to?

MR: Well, when we first lived there, there was no Catholic church over there. No church, so we kids, we had to walk to Fort Street. Yeah. We used to walk in the morning. Our parents never went. But they send us kids, eh? (Chuckles) So, we used to walk to Fort Street. Whenever there was a wedding or. . . . Then they used to ride a car and take the child to be baptized or the couple to be married. Then in 1931, I think, St. Theresa's was built.

MK: Oh, that's the year you got married, yeah?

MR: Yeah. St. Theresa's was built. Then we didn't have to go all the way to Fort Street.

MK: I know you lived Palama long time, yeah?

MR: Yeah.

MK: After you lived in the Auld Lane area, what area did you move to?

MR: Over there? Emmeluth Lane.

MK: Emmeluth Lane, okay. And you were there for how many years?

MR: Nine years, we lived there.

MK: How was the neighborhood over there?

MR: Yeah, that's the one I just described. Yeah, yeah.

MK: Oh, okay. That's the one that was all mixed, but lot of Puerto Ricans.

MR: Mm hmm.

MK: When you folks were living over there, what were you doing?

MR: Well, I got through school and after that, I went to look for a job, you know. I got a job--no, that's when I went to Pacific Guano. That's when I started working Pacific Guano. I think I worked two and a half years over there. And then I went to look for work. I went to the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] looking for work. I told them, well, I was looking for a maid as a job, yeah? So, they got me a job with two haole ladies. They were widows, mother and daughter living together. Kinda elderly already. But they got me a job and I went to work for them at Manoa. I stayed with them for quite a while. She taught me how to cook. Then, after that, she opened up a little place, catering place. That's when I worked for her cooking as a caterer. And then, her mother died and she was alone and sick. She wasn't well. She used to suffer from ulcers. So, she went on a trip around the world. She gave up her business. That's when I went to Waikiki, and I worked over there until I was married.

MK: You mentioned that you worked at the Pacific Guano Fertilizer Company. Can you tell me where that was located and what kind of work you did over there?

MR: That was in Iwilei, between American Can Company and. . . . It was right on Iwilei. Yeah. Almost next to American Can. But in between they had little stores. That's where it was.

MK: And then, what kind of work did you do?

MR: Oh, I sewed bags. I sewed the bags and I scraped bags.

MK: What did you think about that place and the work?

MR: I liked it. I mean, the job that I had, I liked, yeah. But then, if they send you to the mill, that was a different kind of work, you know. They used to send mostly the elderly women there because we were still too young. They used to come out, oh, all messy, all dirty, full of dust. Some kind of dust. Because they were over there turning bags or something on machinery and all that. But they said, oh, it was bad. It used to smell bad. So, I never did get to go there. I like my job.

MK: I think you mentioned that you also worked cannery, too, yeah, before that?

MR: Mm hmm. Yes, before that, I worked four vacations--you know, seasons--in the cannery.

MK: What cannery was that?

MR: CPC [California Packing Corporation]. (Chuckles)

MK: What did you think of the work you did over there?

MR: No, I didn't like cannery. I didn't like pineapples. (Chuckles)

MK: What was your job?

MR: My job was to break--you know at the end of the table? The pine [pineapple] that would come down that wasn't too good, we used to break it in half and throw it down. That's where they used to have broken slices. Pack broken slices. I used to do that. I also trimmed the small pine.

MK: And then you worked for the ladies, and then for the catering service, yeah?

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: You know, all that time, how was your father supporting the family?

MR: Oh, yes. He used to work for Hawaiian Contracting and Hawaiian Dredging Company. He was a laborer there. E.E. Black. Yeah, he worked for E.E. Black.

MK: And by that time, how many were in the family?

MR: Oh, there were six of us. My mother had nine children, but three died in infancy. So there were six of us.

MK: And you contributed your earnings to the family?

MR: Right.

MK: Your father worked.

MR: Yes.

MK: How about your other brothers and sisters at that time?

MR: Oh, they were too young. They were too young. They were in school.

MK: So how was it for the family financially?

MR: Not bad, not bad. It wasn't very good, but it wasn't bad. Yeah. We got along pretty good.

MK: And then, you folks moved to Adelaide Street near Bishop Museum?

MR: Yes, we lived there for about a year, Adelaide Street.

MK: And then, to King Street?

MR: King Street. Yeah, and after that to---no, after that we went to Lakimela Lane.

MK: I noticed you folks moved, moved, moved, yeah?

MR: Yeah, we moved around, yeah.

MK: How come?

MR: I don't know. (Chuckles) I don't know why we did so much moving.

MK: But, let's see, when you folks were living King Street you got married in 1931?

MR: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: What was your husband's name?

MR: Philip Rios.

MK: How did you meet him?

MR: While working at Pearl Harbor he met with my future brother-in-law, and he [brother-in-law] brought him over the house, introduced him, and then that's how we met. He kept coming, you know. We dated, went to the movies, stuff like that--I had to go with chaperone, but we went to the (chuckles) movies. We did go.

MK: Who was the chaperone?

MR: Usually my sister who was the next to me, you know. Otherwise, we couldn't go to the movies. Always had to have somebody. (Chuckles)

MK: What did your parents think about your future husband?

MR: They liked him. They liked him right away. Because he was sort of a quiet man, you know. Very polite. So, they liked him right away.

MK: I don't know if there are any Puerto Rican customs, but are there certain customs you follow during the courtship and the getting married time?

MR: Oh, yes. They were strict about things like that. Always, if the boy came to the house, the parents had to be--somebody had to be--around all the time. And going out, you couldn't go out alone. Although sometimes we sneaked, though. You know, we had to sneak. Like when I used to work, he used to go and meet me after work, and like that. (Chuckles) But they were strict.

MK: How did he propose to you or ask your parents if he could marry you?

MR: No, he just went right up to my father and said, "I'm interested in your daughter and I want her hand in marriage." Then, they ask you how you feel and you tell them how you feel. That was it. (Chuckles)

MK: Where was your wedding held?

MR: Over there on King Street. (Chuckles) The little house on King Street. Because the house was small, we had a small gathering. Not the big thing, you know. No dancing like all the other weddings. No dancing. We just had a few sandwich. We had a haole style. I was already haolefied, so I made sandwiches.

(Laughter)

MR: And salad, and punch, you know. Small things like that, cake. Yeah. (Chuckles)

MK: Oh, so you had a haole style wedding.

MR: I was haole style. (Chuckles) Yeah.

MK: So, after you folks got married, where did you folks live?

MR: We lived right in the back in another little apartment, you know, housing. Like duplex. So we lived right in the back of my parents.

MK: How long did you folks stay over there?

MR: Oh, let me see, how long did we stay there? We didn't stay there too long. Then we moved to Lakimela Lane.

MK: This Lakimela Lane area, what kind of area was that?

MR: Oh, we were right in between one Hawaiian house, Japanese on this side, Japanese on this side, and Japanese on the other side. We were in the middle. And one Chinese family on the other side. We were in the middle. (Chuckles) Nice people, though.

MK: Every day, what kind of things did you do?

MR: We just stayed home and did our thing at home. You know, work, took care of the kids. That was about all.

MK: You just mentioned your kids, yeah? When you were in Palama, you had your three children in 1932, 1935 and 1937, yeah?

MR: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Where did you have your babies?

MR: Kapiolani.

MK: I know that in Filipino families, Portuguese families, Puerto Rican families, you have the baptisms and godparents.

MR: Godparents.

MK: I was wondering, how do you select a godparent?

MR: Well, usually, I selected relatives. You know, like my sister and her husband. Well, one of the boys had a friend. If you know the person well, then you select. Either from relatives or friends.

MK: What's their responsibilities as godparents?

MR: Well, they are supposed to look after the child if anything happens to their parents. Then they supposed to look after the child, the welfare of the child.

MK: Since you folks were still living Lakimela Lane kinda long time, what schools did the children start at in Palama?

MR: They were too young. My daughter went to---I started her at kindergarten at St. Theresa's. But then, she was in the first grade when we moved back, when we moved here. So, she had to go to Kalihi-Uka School. So the kids went all to Kalihi-Uka School, and then to Kalakaua, and then to Farrington.

MK: I was wondering, what kind of job did your husband have?

MR: He was the same thing as my father did. He worked for contractors for little while, then he went to the Navy yard. He went in as a

laborer, but he got promoted to truck driver and then to radiator mechanic. Yeah, he got promoted radiator mechanic.

MK: How long did he work at Pearl Harbor?

MR: Thirty-two years. He had to retire medically, though. On medical. 'Cause he got sick. Then they told him, "Well, you got thirty-two years in, you can retire now." So, he retired. Then, he went to work for the State to make up for his Social Security quarters. So, he worked four years for them. Then again he had to retire medically.

MK: Financially, how was it for the family when you were raising your children and your husband was working for different contractors, and Pearl Harbor?

MR: In the beginning it was a little rough, but later it was okay. By the time the second one came, oh, everything was okay. We got along pretty good.

MK: In 1939, you said you moved from Palama to over here.

MR: Over here, uh huh.

MK: Why did you folks move?

MR: We bought this lot. We bought this lot, and then we had the house built. So, that's how we came here. This was cheap, you know. Was only \$200, the lot. So, we borrowed the money to build the house. They couldn't lend us on that salary more than \$1300. So with that, we built the house. Was small. Just two bedrooms. But we were happy to move to something that we would own someday. So then, after my mother had to come to live with me, when she couldn't take care of herself anymore, I had another room added and I enlarged the kitchen. The kitchen was small. Then after that, when my son got married, then we started, we built this house for them. Then they started their family and this house got (chuckles) too small, so we shifted. We switched [houses].

MK: Back in 1939, what did this area look like? Now there's lot of houses, but how was it back then?

MR: Well, there was a house over here next door. My brother-in-law used to live next door. He had built his house first. This was the last house. The house across the street wasn't there. And over there, there was an old house. Old family used to live there. Good friends of ours. Down below at the beginning of the hill, there was an old Japanese house over there, too. It's now the same family there, but they have a newer house. The other one across the street was there. That's about all. That area over there, that was bare. That was all guavas, you know. Guava trees.

MK: You mean, all that area across the street from Kamaikai, that side?

MR: Mm hmm. All that wasn't there. There was only one house up that street. Who was it now? The Jensens? The Jensens and. . . . What was that family? Well-known Hawaiian family, you know. Part-Hawaiian family used to live up there, one old house.

MK: Miles? Billy Miles?

MR: No, no was. . . . No, no. Mr. Miles used to live below, across the church. Well, anyway, I've forgotten the name.

MK: So, this Kalihi Valley area, what kinds of people lived here?

MR: All Portuguese. They were mostly Portuguese. Yeah.

MK: How about Puerto Ricans in 1939?

MR: I think we were the first ones that came. No, no, no. The ones across were the first ones that came. Mohikas. Then, on that side [Nihi Street], there were a few other families that started to come up. Yeah, on Nihi Street side. Gee, I can't remember. Then, inside Kalihi [Street], inside here, there were a couple of families over there. They moved to the Mainland after that, you know.

MK: With that small number of Puerto Rican families up here, were there Puerto Rican style . . .

MR: Gatherings? Not that I know of. Already we had changed our way of life, you know. Mostly we stayed home, and maybe visited somebody when the person was sick or something. We didn't---except during the war, though. There were a lot of Puerto Rican soldiers that used to come up this way. So there was a house on the other side where they had a lot of dancing every Sunday. I think they used to cook food and sell. Yeah, like pasteles, and the turnovers--you know, pork turnovers, all those kind of stuff like that. So they used to come. They used to visit my mother, too, some of them. Yeah, used to spend the day.

MK: They were Puerto Rican soldiers from. . . .

MR: Puerto Rico and New York. Yeah, they used to come up. We met a lot of them.

MK: Gee, I wonder, were there a lot romances that I've heard . . .

MR: Yes!

MK: . . . between the men and the local . . .

MR: Sure! Had, you know. Some of them got married here. Some of them

had wives over there but they were romancing the women from here, yeah? (Chuckles)

MK: You just mentioned World War II. You know, when December 7 came, what do you remember about that day?

MR: Yeah, I remember. I was in church. When we got out of church, walking up the hill--we had to walk those days--walking up the hill, I could hear all this noise. I looked towards Pearl Harbor. I saw all the dark smoke. I was thinking, "Gee, gosh, they must be practicing." You know, maneuvering or something. But I kept on going like nothing. Just as I reached the back steps, I heard that noise, boom!, you know, oh. That's when that Mrs. ["Gussie"] Ornellas' house got . . .

MK: Hit?

MR: Yeah. Shrapnel, whatever it was. My poor daughter and my nephew had just passed the cemetery. They fell down with the concussion. They fell down. And when that happened, oh, they got up quickly and they ran! (Chuckles) They ran up the steps. When I got home, my husband still sleeping. He was lazy, he wouldn't go to church. So, he was still sleeping. He got up, the noise. He said, "Gee, what is that?"

I said, "Oh, that's nothing. That's the war." Just out of, you know, not thinking. He got up all excited. You know, this kept on shree! over here. Shree! We said, "Gee, what's happening?" So, us nosy people, we went up on top of the hill to look, oh, watching Pearl Harbor. The things going wheew! over our heads. (Chuckles) Whatever that was. Shots or whatever that was. Oh, the noise. But then, somebody next door across the street, they heard it on the radio. They had the radio on, so they heard. Then, we put on our radio. The guy said, "Ey, we are being attacked. Put on your folks' radio." So we put on our radio, and then they were calling the Pearl Harbor workers. So, my husband, without eating breakfast and all that, he had to put on his clothes and take off and go to work. I took my kids and I went to my mother's house. Stayed there for I don't know how many days. Three or four days. Stayed there, yeah.

MK: For the rest of the war, how was it for you folks with the martial law and everything?

MR: Well, it wasn't very easy but we got along, though. We got along. We had to carry those gas masks, you know, when we went into town. We had to pay our bills in town. We didn't have no way in Kalihi where you could pay bills. We had to go all the way to town and to the market with our gas masks. That's what I didn't like. I always prayed that I wouldn't have to use that thing. Thank God, we (chuckles) never did. It never happened.

MK: How about blackouts?

MR: Oh, blackouts were bad, because they could see light from underneath your door, you know. You could see light. Their civil defense used to come around, "Shut off you folks' lights. Shut off you folks' lights." Then, finally, we got paper, the black paper, and put it on the windows, and around the doors, and wherever little light would go through. Then we could have light. But it was bad in the beginning. We had to maneuver around the house without light. We used to have fun, though. One time, my brother-in-law, he was looking for the bathroom. He was climbing up the wall. He said, "Where, where?" He said, ah, he couldn't find (chuckles) the bathroom, climbing up the wall. He said, "Oh, my goodness, I'm climbing up this wall."

(Laughter)

MK: So dark, huh?

MR: Yeah, so dark, you know, oh.

MK: How about the rationing, the food or the gasoline . . .

MR: Yeah, that was hard, too. That was kind of hard. But we never really had real bad difficulties. Because we always managed to get. You know what I did? My mother used to raise chickens and she had to have chicken feed, and was hard to get. So, what I did, I went to Palama Store. Those stores, we used to buy from the father, you know, when the father was living. So, we went over there, and we told them that we used to buy from the father's store and if they could help us. We needed chicken feed and things like that. Things that we couldn't get outside. They said, "Yeah, yeah." Oh, they were so kind. They were so good, those Kawasaki boys. They said, "Yeah, Auntie, yeah. Come, I give you." They used to give us, you know, whatever they could. Ten pounds, five pounds. Rice, the same thing. We never hardly went without rice. They used to give us. So we started buying all our groceries over there.

MK: Palama Store?

MR: Palama Store, yeah. They helped a lot, you know. Well, little neighborhood stores, you know. They were all around, those little We had one here. In fact, it's still there. We used to call it K.C. Market. Well, I bought for a while from there, but then when we started to hard time like that getting different kinds of food like flour or rice or chicken feed, that's when we went to Palama. The boys were so good to us. They used to even deliver for us.

MK: How was transportation around here? Late 1930s, '40s?

MR: It was bad. Unless you owned a little car, you had to walk down to

the bus stop where it is now, though. But the buses were running, yeah.

MK: How about the school for the kids wartime?

MR: Well, they were all over here at that time. Kalihi-Uka [School]. So, it wasn't that hard.

MK: As your kids were growing up, during the war years, after the war years, what were you concerned about most for them? As a mother?

MR: Oh, during the war, oh, of course, their safety. You know, at one time, the sirens came on and the teachers sent them home. My youngest boy was so frightened, he ran all the way. Oh, he was white when he came. You know, my youngest boy is handicapped mentally, and I think it came from that. From the war years. Because everytime he used to hear a siren, he used to hang onto me. He used to shake, and even throw up, you know. So, I think he got nervous breakdown. That made him. . . . Right now, he's in Lanakila Center. He goes there about two, three hours a day.

MK: So the war years really affected him?

MR: Yeah, I think that did it, though, yeah. But other than that, the other two didn't. . . . You know, they were okay.

MK: How about when your children were going Kalakaua and Farrington, growing up, what were you most concerned about for the children?

MR: I was concerned really. Because they were good kids. I didn't have to worry about them not obeying or not. . . . Mostly about doing their homework, though. I had to get after them for that. But other than that, my daughter, she gave me no problem. She went on to high school. I wasn't worried about them.

MK: I was wondering, when you were raising your children, what kind of Puerto Rican customs or things you tried to pass on to the children?

MR: Actually, nothing. Not my two boys, but my daughter was very interested in the music and the dancing, of course. The fun part of it.

(Laughter)

MR: That's about all. Nothing else. Of course, our medicinal things. Every nationality has their medicinal products that they like to use. And I used to use that on them (chuckles) when they used to get sick. Yeah. But nothing else, really.

MK: After you folks moved up here, what church did you then belong to?

MR: Over here?

MK: Uh huh.

MR: The same one. Our Lady of the Mount.

MK: I've heard about the August, you have the. . . .

MR: Yeah. The August processions. Yeah, celebrations. Yeah.

MK: How was that done?

MR: In the beginning, they used to have a large carnival going on there. And then, they had procession the next day, and the big Mass celebration, High Mass, and all that. Different organizations would take part in that. But after a while, that got to be too expensive. You know, not much profit coming in. So we just would have the procession and the Mass. That's all we do now. But once a year, then we have fundraising project. Like now, we have the huli-huli chicken going on. So, in those days, it used to be the carnival, the fundraising project. But that got to be too much work. Only the same people were always involved. Not much profit, so they figured, oh, they do away with that. And they try something else.

MK: Have you noticed any change in the church membership? You've been a member of the church for, oh, over forty years.

MR: Forty years, yeah. Forty-five years, yeah. Yes, there's been a lot of changes, yeah.

MK: What kind of changes have you noticed?

MR: Lot of changes. A lot of new people, you know, that have come in. Like, there's the Filipino community now. The Samoan community. In those days, was mostly Portuguese. All Portuguese. But now we have Hawaiians, and we have some Japanese families. So, it's come a long way, though. Now, we're going to try to make it more outreach. So, there's a lot of do there yet. But it's big now, yeah.

MK: How big is the membership?

MR: Oh, I suppose about 700 to 800. So, we have three Masses on Sunday and one on Saturday night.

MK: Like you've lived up in this valley over forty years, yeah? What do you see as the major changes in the valley? Like the road. . . .

MR: The growth, sure. Gosh, all those hills over there, full of houses. (Chuckles) They weren't there when I came. Yeah, the growth mostly.

MK: How about the people?

MR: The people, they're nice people. They're all good people, I think. Yeah, from what I see, you know. Everybody, mostly quiet people.

Everybody get along. Yeah, nobody minds each other's business, you know. It's very nice, I think.

MK: Somebody told me that in the old days, they used to exchange a lot of food over the fence and feed each other.

MR: Yes, that's right. But that's not anymore . . .

MK: How is it now days?

MR: No, that's not anymore.

MK: Why do you think . . .

MR: Sometimes . . .

MK: . . . that you don't have that anymore?

MR: I don't know. I don't know, really. I share my bananas with my neighbors sometimes. They share their parsley or whatever, you know. Papaya or something. Or with my neighbors across the street, yeah.

MK: Someone told me in the old days, everybody tried to help . . .

MR: Shared, yeah. Everybody helped. Yes. Sometimes, I don't have gandules. Gandules, yeah? I have a nephew that's living with a Japanese lady. They not married, they staying together. But she's . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

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MK: You were saying that your cousin [nephew] up in the valley . . .

MR: Yeah, yeah. Alice is a beautiful person. They have trees over there, so she brings me gandules (chuckles). She brings gandules for me.

MK: How about any other changes you noticed in the valley?

MR: Oh, yeah, the highway. That wasn't there. So that's over there now. And the churches on the other side, you know. I don't know what denominations they are, but they're couple of churches, new, over there on that side. All that is really big changes. The Kam Center, Kam Shopping Center, wasn't there. Thank God it is there now. We don't have to go so (chuckless) far. Yeah.

MK: I wanted to ask you one last question. You've lived Kalihi long time, over forty years. What do you think about Kalihi as the place you've lived?

MR: Oh, to me, it's a wonderful place to live in. I like it. I like it very much. A wonderful place to live in. I'm glad [George] Ariyoshi was from here. (Chuckles)

MK: Why do you say it's a wonderful place?

MR: It's been good for me and my family. It's been good, yes. I like the people. The get-togethers in the church, it's so wonderful. And it's not far. Everything is close now. And what else could we ask for? (Chuckles)

MK: So, I'll end the interview here, okay?

MR: Okay. (Chuckles)

MK: Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

KALIHI: **Place of Transition**

Vol. I

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL
HISTORY PROJECT**

**Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawaii at Manoa**

JUNE 1984